

Revelation 20

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Before the Lord Jesus Christ can establish His millennial rule upon this earth, the Devil (Satan) must be restrained. An angel appears with the keys to the Abyss, the Bottomless Pit. He is holding a strong chain with which Satan will be bound. The Bottomless Pit is where all fallen angels are imprisoned while awaiting their final place of punishment (Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 2:4).

Luke 8:31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Satan is given various diabolical names in this text. Revelation depicts him as “the Dragon”, but the reference to the “Old Serpent” reminds us of who it was that deceived Adam and Eve in Eden. Throughout the intervening years, he has been the accuser and adversary of all who believe.

Satan is captured (seized) by the angel and bound for a thousand years in the Bottomless Pit. This is obviously the same thousand years that Jesus Christ reigns on this present earth. This acts as a quarantine rather than a complete and eternal imprisonment. Because of it the earth will be free from his deceptive influences for one thousand years. It is during this time that righteousness will flourish, there will be worldwide peace, and the Earth will be returned to its Paradise condition (see Isaiah 11:3-5; 2:4; 35:1-2).

Isaiah 11:3-5 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

Isaiah 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 35:1-2 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Now that Satan is imprisoned in the Abyss, he cannot deceive anyone. He is totally without influence or power on the earth. Not only is he put in the Bottomless Pit, but he is bound with a strong chain. The Pit is then sealed and locked by the angel.

The vision offers us a brief look at what will happen after the Millennium is over. Satan is released for a short time and allowed to go and tempt the world to give up following Christ. We must remember that the Earth will be populated by mortal men and women during the thousand years, and as time goes on, no doubt many will take for granted the many blessings they enjoy. Do they

really have faith in God? If Adam and Eve believed the Serpent, it should not surprise us that humans in the Millennium will listen to him too. He will likely appear to them as an angel of light. The outcome of this is dealt with in Revelation 20:11-15.

We see in this verse that the Millennium is not the same as the New Heaven and New Earth. Failure to recognise this has fatal consequences. If they were the same then we would have Satan being released into the New Earth after his thousand-year captivity.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

John's vision now reveals the vast multitude of redeemed people standing before "thrones". We are not told who are on the thrones, and though there are several ideas bandied about by commentators, we must just accept that those who sit on them are worthy to do so.

Those before the thrones are made up of all who lived for Christ, refusing to be controlled by the Antichrist's system, even to the death. Some commentators see these as being limited to the 'tribulation saints', but surely if Babylon is guilty of all the slain of the earth, then these must include the redeemed of all ages. It is better to see this multitude as being made up of all believers from every dispensation (Revelation 5:10; 20:6; 22:5).

Revelation 5:10 **And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.**

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

The unbelievers will not be resurrected, reunited with their bodies, until after the Millennium is over. They will stand before the Great White Throne for final sentence to the Lake of Fire.

The First Resurrection is a reference to verse 4. The First Resurrection is actually made up of several resurrections, but we see the gathering of these in a single place. The Church is raptured before the Tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

The Two Witnesses are resurrected at the end of the first 3½ years (Revelation 11:11).

Revelation 11:11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

There is obviously a resurrection of the believers who die during the Wrath of God period (see Daniel 12:2).

Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

We should see this First Resurrection as being the first time they are all together. The words "This is the first resurrection" refers to verses 4 and 6, for if it were about the judgement of the unbelievers of verse 5, then verse 6 would be problematic to say the least. The first sentence of verse 5 is therefore parenthetical.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Those who are saved of all ages, and are part of this assembled crowd, will never experience the second death. The second death is for unbelievers of all generations, and they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 21:8).

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The saved are rewarded with the great privilege of priests of God and Christ as well as reigning with Him throughout His earthly rule.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

Then Satan is released for a short period after the Millennium, but why does not God just keep him in the Abyss for eternity? Regardless of the fact that man is in a perfect environment, as were Adam and Eve, his heart is still open to suggestions and influences of evil. God will allow Satan to test man one last time.

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Satan immediately is back to his old ways (1 Peter 5:8).

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

The devil never changes his desire to dethrone Christ. He goes out to deceive the nations, including Gog and Magog (Russia and her allies?). He assembles another great army to fight against Christ. During the obvious peace and prosperity of the Millennial rule of Christ, have the nations learned anything? How easily and quickly man is tempted and deceived by Satan. Rebellion against God is easily ignited by the devil (Jeremiah 17:9).

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

The fact that the nations can be deceived means that life will continue as normal during the Millennium, and that some still do not submit totally to Christ. We must once again remind ourselves that mortal man will live through the Millennium Age; there will be births and death; people will live, work and travel in much the same way as they do today.

Gog and Magog refers to the army raised from the regions of Russia, Iran, Turkey and other countries. It seems that this coalition further influences others from around the world to form a

great army to attack Jesus in Jerusalem. It is also possible that “Gog and Magog” does not mean any particular country or countries, but is simply symbolic of the great rebellion against God at the end of the Millennium period.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Satan assembles his army outside of Jerusalem, the city of the saints. This is obviously where Jesus is reigning and ruling the earth from (Isaiah 2:1-5; 9:6).

Isaiah 2:1-5 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

So both Jesus and all who inhabit Jerusalem will be attacked by Satan and his host.

This final attempt to dethrone God is in reality a suicide mission. In an instant this army is consumed with fire from Heaven (Hebrews 10:27; 12:29).

Hebrews 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

Hebrews 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

No man can rebel against God and win. Rebels are always the losers.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Once again the Devil is seized. He is cast into the Lake of Fire with the fallen angels and demons to be with the Antichrist and False Prophet. There he will be tormented for eternity (Matthew 25:41).

Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

He will never be released from there. At last mankind is free from Satan. It has taken seven thousand years of world history and an unknown amount of pre-history time, but finally he is gone forever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Now John sees the end of time, the end of the earth, and the end of all wickedness. He sees the Great White Throne of Judgement. Who is seated on this Throne? John 5:22, 27 informs us that it must be Jesus, yet Revelation 20:12 says it is God.

John 5:22,27 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: [27] And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

How can some say Jesus is not God?

It is at this time our present universe is destroyed by God and replaced with a brand new one (2 Peter 3:10-13).

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

God does this to purge the universe of death. Our present earth contains evidence of over 6,000 years of death.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

These souls do not have their names in the Book of Life: they are doomed, but they still must be judged according to their deeds (Romans 3:10,20).

Revelation 3:10,20 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. [20] Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

The Book of Life only contains the names of the redeemed from all generations (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 21:27; Luke 10:20).

Philippians 4:3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

Revelation 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Luke 10:20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

This is actually the Second Resurrection. The life story of each person is opened. Every word, action and thought is declared. They will receive degrees of punishment.

In this courtroom we find the Judge and the Condemned. There is no jury or defence counsel. There is a sentence but no appeal against conviction. Nobody will be able to defend himself or raise an objection. There will be much “weeping and gnashing of teeth” and “anguish” though (Matthew 13:41-42; Romans 2:9).

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

All bodies of the unrighteousness dead are to be resurrected and reunited with their souls. It does not matter how they died or where they were buried, God has the blueprint for each person, and He will reconstruct them. Those who are in Hell will be there, too, for this final judgement. Everyone receives a just judgement.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Death and Hell are cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the final imprisonment of all fallen angels, demonic spirits and human rebels. Certainly all who have ever rebelled against God meet their end in this place. It is the Second Death – the final and complete separation from God (see 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Jude : 13).

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Jude :13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Notice that “death” itself is cast into the Lake of Fire. Death is the product of sin, and being the enemy of life, it must be destroyed too (1 Corinthians 15:26).

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Everyone whose names are not in the Book of Life will be thrown into the Lake of Fire, the place of eternal punishment for the Devil and his angels ... “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). This is why we must urge people to sign up with the Lord Jesus before its too late. There is no second chance, just a second death!